

Gratitude Community Comment November 5, 2013, Mike Goldsby

The grumpier you are, the more jerks you seem to run into. And, the more positive your outlook, the smoother things seem to go.

A lot can be said for a positive attitude. I have a close friend, Laura Grant, who received a diagnosis of late stage pancreatic cancer. That was three years ago. Cancer is complicated. So is cancer treatment. But Laura is positive in light of dire circumstances and her positive attitude may well be why she is living long beyond predictions.

Laura likes to ask people, "What was your favorite thing today?" First off, she likes to hear what people say. But secondly, she likes to share her favorite thing. And she often has two or three favorite things to talk about.

Some days when she asks me, I have to think awhile, to find something positive. Other times, there are several obvious positive events.

I found some quotes about gratitude and there was one negative quote:

"Gratitude is a sickness suffered by dogs." That's from Joseph Stalin. Sounds like a fun guy. There were a lot of quotes from people I've never heard of. Eileen Caddy writes, "Gratitude helps you to grow and expand; gratitude brings joy and laughter into your life and the lives of all of those around you."

I took a course recently on Emotional Intelligence, taught by Janet Ruprecht. She took recent developments from neuroscience and applied those to business and relationships. She taught about mood contagion, that the mood of a business's top leaders can be the key driver of performance. Mood is infectious and moods spread from the top down.

There are exceptions but she said a business's financial performance can be linked to the leader's emotional maturity. High emotional maturity leads to a business climate where information is shared and people trust each other. Low emotional maturity promotes fear and anxiety.

Ruprecht taught about 'mirror' neurons, how one person's mood can affect others. This is why laughter is contagious or why a bad someone else's bad mood can impact you for hours. She said "Poorly delivered criticism from the boss triggers hormonal surges", which negatively impacts reasoning, memory, creativity and cognition.

So back to gratitude. Feeling gratitude and expressing gratitude can brighten your day and other people's as well. Count your problems and grumble, and you can darken someone else's day.

I found a little card with a Buddhist Seven Point Mind training that had some short phrases to contemplate during the day. **Be grateful to everyone. Don't brood over the faults of others. At all times, simply rely on a joyful mind. And, Don't expect a standing ovation.**

I put that little card in my work notebook and I often come across it during a stressful moment in my work day. It sounds corny but it helps me.

More gratitude: Next Monday is Veteran's Day and that is a reminder to thank a Vet. Jennifer Granholm writes "Ceremonies are important, but our gratitude to our veterans has to be more than visits to the troops and once a year Memorial ceremonies. We honor the dead best by treating the living well."

This is Mike Goldsby for Community Comment